

Education and Workforce Development Cabinet

Madeline Abramson records children's book

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Contact Information:

FRANKFORT, Ky. (July 3, 2014) – Madeline Abramson, wife of Lieutenant Governor Jerry Abramson, recently volunteered her time and voice to record a children's book for the Kentucky Talking Book Library (KTBL) at the Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives (KDLA). Mrs. Abramson recorded *A Pocketful of Cricket* by Kentucky author Rebecca Caudill, so that this classic children's book can be enjoyed by people who can't read print because of a visual, physical or reading disability.

"Reading is one of life's most treasured and simplest pleasures," Mrs. Abramson said. "That's why I'm so happy to support the Talking Book Library and open the world of books to people who might not otherwise have a chance to experience these stories."

Mrs. Abramson recorded the short children's book June 26 at the KTBL studio housed at KDLA in Frankfort as a special guest. Normally, it can take months to record a book. Volunteers must commit an hour per week in the studio until a project is complete.

The free library service is part of a nationwide network of libraries administered by the National Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, a division of the Library of Congress that began in 1931.

"We really appreciate Mrs. Abramson taking the time to help us provide a classic children's book that otherwise would not be accessible to our readers. She has been active in the arts, education, and children's issues, and we felt she would enjoy this experience in addition to helping a good cause," said Barbara Penegor, manager of KTBL.

In 2013, KTBL served 3,616 Kentucky customers from ages four through 104. Its collection includes more than 200,000 Braille and audio books for preschoolers through seniors in every subject and genre. The service circulated more than 4,000 Braille books, more than 150,000 digital books and in excess of 7,000 cassette works last year.

KTBL makes a special effort to record digital versions of books by Kentucky authors and books that are of special interest to Kentuckians. In 2013, 40 volunteers contributed more than 1,300 hours to produce 37 books relevant to Kentucky users. Nearly 8,000 digital Kentucky books were circulated in 2013.

People who are interested in volunteering for the program must fill out an application. Volunteers start by training to review and edit raw recordings, then monitor recording sessions, and then may audition to narrate.

Only registered patrons who have been certified as physically unable to read print have access to the collection and the special equipment needed to listen to them. Books can be sent to users and returned through the mail free of charge to customers or downloaded from a website. KTBL provides users with a special digital player, or they can use their own iPad or iPhone for downloading books.

Penegor encourages more Kentuckians to access the free service. According to a 2012 Disability Status Report from Cornell University, approximately 3 percent or about 130,000 of Kentuckians have a visual disability that might make them eligible for Talking Book service.

Those interested in volunteering or becoming a customer of the service, may call the KTBL at 1-502-564-8300, ext. 276 or email ktbl.mail@ky.gov.